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OLC #77-4276

3 October 1977

SSCI

MEMORANDUM FOR: Office of Legislative Counsel

Guidelines-DDO-RR

FROM

:

Special Assistant to the DDO
for External Oversight

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SUBJECT

:

SSCI Relationships

1. We understand that the SSCI has asked for comment on its current procedures and practices, indicating those which might be examined, and perhaps changed, in order to improve the effectiveness of our relationships. Some views of this subject follow:

- There should be more discretion in the treatment of newspaper and other media stories. While there is understanding of the Committee's desires to be fully informed, many media accounts of events are distorted or false. It is not difficult for the Agency to respond to these accusations, but the Committee should not always insist that the negative be proven.

- There should be increased concentration on future requirements and activities and less on past events which, in all instances, should be considered in conjunction with the time in history when they occurred.

- There should be less use of past events as examples of abuse; particularly those events prior to 1975, when the Committee seeks background for making recommendations and judgements. The Agency and the Intelligence Community have instituted a number of policy and organizational changes since 1975, and about which the Committee is aware; these are not always taken into account when the Committee comments on history.

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- SSCI comments to the media about its oversight role should, if possible, be coordinated with the Agency in order to preclude embarrassment and compromise.

- There should be a less adversarial approach to the overall relationship between the Committee and the Agency and more of an approach which attempts to develop a sense of collegiality.

- There should be a sharper distinction between oversight, and command and control.

- The SSCI should not ask the Agency to provide documents on or from other U.S. government institutions.

- There should be a better appreciation of the assigned use of personnel and of cut-backs in Agency and Directorate of Operations personnel and the impact of these cutbacks on the length of time to respond to Committee requests, particularly those concerned with the minor aspects of issues.

- There should be an appreciation for realistic deadlines and less demand for quick responses to non time-sensitive issues.

- There should be improved oversight by the Committee on the increasing number of requests from other Senate Committees for information similar to, or the same as, that which is already being provided, or has been provided, to the SSCI. The SSCI should develop a sharper focal point role for relations between the Agency Directorate of Operations and other Senate Committees and their members.

- The SSCI should develop a disciplined training or indoctrination program for permanent staff members seeking a career in intelligence oversight to allow them to give more informed and mature consideration to intelligence issues.

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SECRET

- SSCI staff members should be more considerate in their requests for appointments and support from the Agency and the Directorate of Operations, realizing that the requirements for intraAgency management sometimes transcend the non time-sensitive needs of the SSCI.

- The SSCI should be precise in making requests, in writing if possible, in order that there would be a full understanding of what is required. Many SSCI requests are cavalier in nature and often not precise.

- The SSCI should not view Directorate of Operations activity, past, present or future, from the point of view of an approval authority, except for that provided by law.

- The SSCI, particularly staff members, should appreciate the need to protect source identities.



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